



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers October 2, 2008

Take the High Road
Share the Road • It Belongs To Everyone

Drive Safely Work Week 2008
October 6-10

Your Last Opportunity to Download Free Materials to Promote the DSWW Campaign

Drive Safely Work Week, October 6-10, 2008 – You Still Have Time To Get Involved!

On average, your workers are more likely to die (on or off the job) from a traffic crash than any other cause. One of the best ways to keep employees safe on the road is to educate them about safety and promote safe driving practices. That's why we're inviting you to be a part of the National Drive Safely Work Week Campaign, October 6-10, 2008, sponsored by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety. Employers across Michigan and the nation are taking this opportunity to improve the safety and health of their employees by preventing traffic related deaths and injuries. For **free resources and ideas** on how to get involved visit <http://www.trafficsafety.org/dsww08/dsww.asp>. All you have to do to receive the free resources is to register and answer several very brief questions about your company.

High-tech Car Features Could Compensate for Older Drivers' Habits

Car manufacturers, urban planners and scholars are trying to counteract elderly drivers' habits as a glut of Canadians enters their golden years. Recently, British researchers proposed several improvements to vehicles that could help drivers stay behind the wheel longer. Night vision, fatigue-detection systems and windshields that project data are some of the high-tech options. Elderly drivers have more crashes than other age groups because they often fatigue quickly, react and move slower and see poorly. To compensate for drowsy driving, the researchers suggest fatigue-detection systems. Sensors that would detect objects on the road and project the information on the windshield, not dashboard, would let drivers keep their eyes on the road. Audio systems could alert speeding drivers or ones who swerve outside their lane. Other researchers found that no two elderly drivers react to new features the same way and warn that the features can be distracting. For more information, go to

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080916.wlcar16/BNStory/lifeMain/>

Source: Globe and Mail, September 16, 2008

GM Researchers Help Aging Drivers

General Motors (GM) researchers are working on a windshield that combines lasers, infrared sensors and a camera to enhance what's happening on the road, so aging drivers can see more clearly. GM's windshield will make objects stand out that could otherwise go unnoticed. The windshield is designed for older drivers, who have vision problems at a much higher rate than other age groups. Currently, 12.4 percent of the population is 65 or older, but by 2030, that is projected to be 20 percent. A spokesman for Chrysler says the automaker is also working on such technologies, but a Ford Motor Co. spokesman said that automaker didn't have similar plans. Source: AP, September 28, 2008



University Takes Data-driven Approach to Pedestrian Safety on Campus

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, one of the first universities in the United States to proactively teach pedestrian safety on campus, established the "Yield to Heels" campaign in 2001. Researchers from UNC's Highway Safety Research Center used crash and perception data to determine the four "hot spots" on campus for pedestrian crashes. Student volunteers and UNC public safety officers passed out fliers and giveaways to pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists who passed through these intersections. "Yield to Heels" days take place once during both the fall and spring semesters. For more information, go to <http://www.hsrb.unc.edu/y2h/> Source: Directions, UNC-HSRC, Summer 2008

Google's Mobile Features Help Drivers, Pedestrians Navigate

Google has added walking directions and the ability to see a location's photo or other image for mobile devices. Now Street View can be overlaid on a Google map on a BlackBerry, Windows Mobile device, S60 systems and Java-enabled phones. The search giant added a beta version of its walking directions to help those carrying portable devices while traveling on foot. Google also upgraded its mobile My Location feature to improve accuracy in determining a mobile user's location. Users can also get information about public transportation for about 50 cities around the world. For more information, go to

http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=9114933&intsrc=hm_list

Source: ComputerWorld, September 17, 2008

Latest Traffic Safety News

Train Crash Illustrates Dangers of Texting, Drowsy Driving

The crash between a freight and passenger train in Chatsworth, Calif. that killed 25 and injured another 135 highlighted the dangers of texting and drowsy driving for all vehicles. The Metrolink engineer's cell phone records show he sent and received text messages while on duty the day of the crash, but it is not yet clear whether he was texting when the crash occurred. He had also worked back-to-back split shifts, which began before dawn and ended at 9 p.m. Nationwide Insurance found that one in five drivers admit to texting behind the wheel, but it's hard to tell how many crashes texting causes because drivers rarely offer that information after the fact. The risk of crashing while texting is similar to the crash risk after a driver has had three to four drinks, according to a University of Massachusetts at Amherst professor who used a simulator to study multi-tasking drivers. Source: Automotive Fleet, September 18, 2008

NTSB Recommends New Technology to Prevent Fatigue-related Crashes

At its latest hearing, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommended that trucking companies make sure their drivers get enough rest and that the government should move closer to mandating alarm systems to alert fatigued truckers. The hearing was held in response to a three-year-old Wisconsin crash where a bus carrying a high school band ran into an overturned semi trailer, killing five people. The truck driver fell asleep at the wheel, which caused the rig to overturn shortly before the bus slammed into it. A jury acquitted the truck driver, even though NTSB investigators found he fell asleep. An NTSB investigator told the board promising new technology could track eye movements to alert drowsy drivers. The board recommended the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study automatic braking and mandate its use if it's effective. Low-tech countermeasures such as rumble strips also can reduce drift-off crashes by 60 percent. Source: Associated Press, September 17, 2008

Drivers Overestimate Capabilities of Safety Systems, Study Finds

In many cases, drivers believe Active Cruise Control, HID and adaptive headlights, back-up cameras and navigation systems are safer and more reliable than they really are, according to a report from the AAA Foundation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Drivers incorrectly believed that Adaptive Cruise Control would help avoid a crash in ways beyond the system's capabilities. Because HID and adaptive headlights illuminate more of the road, drivers tend to be overconfident about their visibility and go faster. Most drivers were not aware that many back-up cameras don't work above 3-6 mph. Overall, the study found drivers rely too much on these features and don't

understand their limitations. For more information, go to <http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/In-VehicleTechnologyReport.pdf> Source: Motor Trend, September 17, 2008

California Bans Texting While Driving

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has banned drivers from reading, writing or sending electronic messages starting Jan. 1. The fine for a first offense is \$20; drivers face a \$50 fine for subsequent violations. "Banning electronic messaging while driving will keep drivers' hands on the wheel and their eyes on the road, making our roadways a safer place for all Californians," Schwarzenegger said. Since the state banned handheld cell phones for drivers July 1, state officers have issued nearly 20,000 citations. After a Metrolink passenger train and freight train collided in September, the California Public Utilities Commission recently banned railroad workers from text messaging or using cell phones on moving trains. Source: Los Angeles Times, September 25, 2008

Study Finds Photo Speed Enforcement Cuts Travel Time

According to a study by the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running, a national advocacy group, speed cameras actually reduce travel time. That's because slower speeds lead to fewer accidents, which means fewer accident-caused traffic jams. The national study of speed cameras looked at a nine-month trial photo enforcement program on an Arizona freeway. The report found that during the trial period: traffic speeds were reduced by about 9 mph, total crashes were reduced between 44 percent and 54 percent and crashes causing injuries were down between 28 percent and 48 percent. Illinois Governor Blagojevich said that he wanted to put speed cameras on interstates across Illinois and use the revenue to pay for extra state troopers to fight crime. An Illinois study found speed cameras reduce average car speed by about 8 mph, he said. For more information, go to

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/transportation/1190796.CST-NWS-ride29a.article#>

Source: Chicago Sun-Times, September 29, 2008

Advancing Technologies

Motorola Takes Big Step Toward the Connected Car

Motorola took a significant step towards commercializing WiMax for vehicles. Their new WiMax module lets automotive-equipment makers build connected devices that can receive broadband information sources on the road. Just as Wi-Fi radically changed how we network our computers, WiMax specifications meet the connection needs for automobiles by having a range measured in miles and broadband throughput. As the standard gets accepted, more companies will develop WiMax-compatible chipsets. WiMax would allow a vehicle-to-vehicle communication network, where, for example, a disabled car can send out a message to approaching vehicles that it is stopped in a freeway lane. Cars that receive this message can then warn their drivers of the hazard. For more information, go to

http://www.motorola.com/mediacenter/news/detail.jsp?globalObjectId=10197_10126_23&pageLocaleId=2026

Source: Motorola news release, September 26, 2008

News from USDOT

Seat Belt Use Reaches Record High of 83 Percent

Seat belt use has hit its highest rate yet, with 83 percent of occupants buckling up during daylight hours. Last year, 82 percent used seat belts. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that about 270 lives are saved for each percent increase in belt use. High-visibility law enforcement efforts like "Click It or Ticket" helped contribute to this year's high rate. Vans and SUVs are showing the highest rate of seat belt use among occupants at 86 percent; 84 percent of passenger car occupants buckle up; and pick up trucks show 74 percent use. States with primary belt laws average about 13 percentage points higher than states with secondary laws. Belt use on expressways is at 90 percent, and use on surface streets is about 80 percent. For more information, go to <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811036.PDF>

Source: USDOT news release, September 17, 2008



Free Child Safety Seat Inspections Launch Nationwide Campaign

Parents had the chance to get their children's car seat checked at 400 locations nationwide on a Saturday this September. Certified inspectors examined the seats free of charge as part of a new national campaign to improve child safety. The Department of Transportation also launched an education effort to get parents to use new latch technology to install the seats. In 2007, 98 percent of infants were regularly restrained, but 70 percent of the seats were installed incorrectly. Parents can find their closest inspection station by going to www.nhtsa.gov

Source: USDOT news release, September 19, 2008

U.S. Transportation Secretary Proposes New Safety Rules for Motorcycle Helmets

U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters announced new proposed rules to improve motorcycle safety by making it easier for riders to identify and use effective helmets, instead of unsafe "novelty helmets." The proposal will also make it harder for riders to use novelty helmets in states that require DOT-certified helmets. The proposal would amend the agency's current motorcycle helmet safety rules to require manufacturers to place a larger, tamper-proof DOT label on the back of certified helmets. The new labels will make it harder for vendors to remove the labels on safe helmets and affix them to the unsafe novelty helmets. The proposed rule would also strengthen the tests helmets must go through to receive DOT certification, including updated tests on how the helmets hold up during impact, whether objects can penetrate the helmet and how well the helmet stays in place during a crash. Recent tests of novelty helmets which are not DOT certified showed they fail to meet current DOT performance tests. Once published in the Federal Register, the agency will seek public comment for 60 days. View the new rule at

http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/Rulemaking/Rules/Associated%20Files/Helmets_Upgrade_NPRM.pdf

Source: USDOT news release, September 29, 2008

International Traffic Safety News

Volvo and Swedish Association Team up to Prevent Crashes

Volvo Car Corporation and the Swedish National Road Administration will work together on a variety of issues, including searching for ways cars and roads can communicate to reduce crashes. Volvo has been gathering crash data since the 1970s and uses the information to develop new safety solutions. Together, Volvo and the Administration will follow up on the results of improvements to vehicles and infrastructure as they evolve. They also will exchange data such as road conditions, infrastructure quality and incidents. Source: Automotive Fleet, September 12, 2008

Pay-as-you-drive Insurance Gains Acceptance in Europe

Pay-as-you-drive (PAYD) insurance is increasing in popularity in Europe because it is bringing drivers' premiums down. At first, PAYD was introduced as a measure to reduce insurance fraud, but now insurance companies are emphasizing the green and safety benefits. In 2007, the PAYD market earned revenues of 18.64 million; estimates for 2015 are \$141.81 million. Low-mileage drivers and young drivers are able to save up to 30 percent on their annual premiums. "PAYD reduces the risk for insurance companies by providing huge incentives for users altering their driving pattern positively, thereby reducing the risk of accidents and claims," an analyst said. Other telematics services such as emergency call can be packaged with PAYD and offered in the same hardware unit.

Source: MarketWatch, September 17, 2008

Texting While Driving Slows Reaction Times, Increases Drifting

Writing and reading text messages impairs driving skills more than being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, according to research by TRL for the RAC Foundation. The researchers used a driving simulator to look at the effects of writing, reading and even ignoring text messages on the driving skills of 17- to 24-year-olds. The reaction times of texting drivers deteriorated by 35 percent. Drivers drifted out of their lanes more often and weren't as able to maintain a safe following distance. The RAC Foundation advises fleets to ban the use of cell phones and PDAs, even when hands free, while driving. Source: FleetNews, September 18, 2008



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UK Police Prepared to Investigate At-work Traffic Deaths

The police will investigate at-work road deaths the same way they would probe murders. Under the Corporate Manslaughter Act, fleet managers can expect officers to raid offices, seize computers and documents and investigate policies and procedures following a worker's death. "We will investigate a road death starting with the most serious offense of murder and then work down," a forensic investigator said. Policies on the use of cell phones will factor into all investigations. Police especially are interested in reducing the number of crashes involving fatigued drivers.

Source: FleetNews, September 23, 2008

European Commission Reserves Day for Road Safety

The European Commission has established a European Road Safety Day as part of its goal to cut the number of crashes from 54,000 to 27,000 by 2010. The second Safety Day will be celebrated on Oct. 13 and will follow the theme of "Road Safety in our Cities."

Toyota's Eye-monitoring Feature Warns Drivers before Crash

Toyota's Pre-crash Safety System has the ability to tell whether a driver's eyes are properly open. The automaker expects its breakthrough to play an important role in reducing crash-related damage. The eye-monitoring feature will be offered soon in Japan. The system uses a camera and image-processing computer to determine the positions of the driver's upper and lower eyelids. If the feature senses a crash is imminent and also sees that the driver's eyes aren't properly open, it issues an earlier warning than it would have without the driver information.

Source: Transport Business, September 2008

More Than a Quarter of Crashes Related to Work in Great Britain

At least 27 percent of the vehicles involved in crashes in 2007 were driven either on a work-related trip or during a commute. The figure for 2006 was 26.7 percent. The Department for Transport released the findings in its "Road Casualty Statistics Great Britain 2007 Annual Report." RoadSafe believes the official number of work-related crashes is lower since they are underreported. More than 247,000 people were killed or injured in traffic crashes last year, down 4 percent from 2006. Source: Department for Transport Road Casualty Statistics Great Britain 2007 Annual Report, September 2008

Early Morning Drunk Driving on the Rise in the U.K.

Later pub closing times have led to an increase in early morning drunk-driving accidents in the U.K. While overall drunk-driving accidents have declined over the past decade, the increase in early-hour accidents may be the result of later pub closing, with more patrons remaining intoxicated when they get up and drive the morning after drinking. Government statistics show the number of drunk-driving crashes beginning to rise after 3 a.m.; at 10 a.m., the number of crashes is 50 percent higher than they were before extended pub hours were introduced. Other factors also may be contributing to the trend, experts said. "I don't think people know how much they are drinking," and many also don't realize how long alcohol stays in their bloodstream, said Andrew Howard, the head of road safety at the U.K. Automobile Association. Warning messages about the dangers of "morning after" drinking were printed on 10 million milk cartons last year, and the British government is considering strengthening drunk-driving laws, including allowing for random breath testing for alcohol use. Source: Daily Telegraph, September 26, 2008

Public Sector Fleets Struggle to Implement Changes

The structure of many public sector organizations makes it difficult for fleet managers to introduce changes related to reducing emissions and improving safety. Public sector fleet managers voiced concerns that they don't have enough control over the factors they need to in order to make changes to their fleets. They cite a lack of internal cooperation, including: gaining support from other departments, such as HR and achieving senior level buy-in for any substantial changes. "Many organisations simply don't have the right fleet strategy agreed at the right level to implement any substantial change when it comes to running these vehicles," said Stuart Walker, brand director of Automotive Leasing, which specialises in leasing vehicles to the public sector. "Many fleet managers said that they constantly come up



against brick walls whenever they try to implement an initiative to make their vehicles greener, more cost-efficient or even safer.” Source: FleetNews, September 26, 2008

Work-Home

MADD Calls Amethyst Initiative a Threat to Safety

Mothers Against Drunk Driving is calling the recent national campaign to lower the legal drinking age to 18 a threat to public health and safety. A panel at MADD’s annual conference in Dallas focused on the Amethyst Initiative, which includes a pledge signed by 130 university presidents. The initiative came about because college administrators can’t control the problem of on-campus binge drinking, said Chuck Hurley, MADD’s chief executive officer. He encouraged researchers to publicize the results of studies related to the issue to counter bias against MADD-related findings. MADD President Laura Dean-Mooney said lowering the drinking age is a matter of public health and safety, not individual rights. Source: JoinTogether, September 16, 2008

10 Ways to Keep Kids Safe in Cars

To kick off National Child Passenger Safety Week, AAA offers 10 tips to help keep children safe in vehicles. 1) Secure loose items—they can become flying projectiles in a crash. 2) Use child locks to keep children from opening the door while the car is moving. 3) Use the correct safety seat for a child’s age, height and weight. 4) Install the seat correctly, preferably with the help of a certified technician. 5) Position away from the airbag—children under 13 should always ride in the back seat. 6) Entertain with soft toys, because hard ones can become projectiles. 7) Secure unused safety seats. 8) Avoid non-regulated products such as mirrors, harness covers or extra padding. 9) Lock parked vehicles’ doors and windows to prevent children from entering unsupervised. 10) Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle.

Source: AAA